

Preventing Truancy

“Habitually Truant” is a school-aged child, not excused from attendance under the lawful and reasonable regulations of such child’s school, who willfully fails to attend school for **more than 8 school days in a quarter (marking period)**. M.G.L. c.119 sec.21.

Truancy is a problem that has long-term effects on children, families and the community. Truancy has been clearly identified as one of the early warning signs that youths potentially are headed for delinquent activity, social isolation or education failure. Keeping children in school is critical to helping children stay out of trouble while increasing the likelihood of their successful transition to adulthood.

We know that for truants or drop-outs:

- Serious assault crimes are twelve times more likely to occur;
- Marijuana use is sixteen times more likely to occur;
- Unemployment is 20% higher than graduates
- Full-time employment is less likely to occur, with only one-half holding full-time jobs; and,
- Projected earnings are 25 % less for male and 40% less for female drop-outs than what a graduate earns.

Resources

Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Cape Cod: 508-771-5150
Boys & Girls Club of Cape Cod: 508-477-8845
Boys & Girls Club of Martha’s Vineyard: 508-627-3303
Boys & Girls Club of Nantucket: 508-228-0158
Cape Cod Child Development: 508-775-6240
Cape Cod Children’s Place: 508-240-3310
Cape Cod Neighborhood Support Coalition: 508-771-4336
Child & Family Service: 508-778-1839
Children’s Cove: 888-863-1900
Community Health Ctr. Of Cape Cod: 508-477-7090
Cultural Center of Cape Cod : 508-394-7100
Dept. of Child & Families (DCF): 508-760-0200
Dept of Youth Services (DYS): 508-759-0307
Falmouth Human Services: 508-548-0533 x16
Falmouth Prevention Partnership: 508-540-2317
Falmouth VIPS-School based mentoring: 508-548-1621
Family Continuity: 508-862-0600
Gosnold: 1-800-444-1554
Harbor Community Health Center-Hyannis- 508-788-5499
Ellen Jones Community Dental Center
Hyannis Service Center: 508-862-6600
Dept. of Mental Health (DMH)
Dept. of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS)
Massachusetts Rehab. (MRC)
Independence House: 508-771-6507
Justice Resource Institute (JRI): 508-771-3156
Martha’s Vineyard Community Services: 508-693-7900
MSPCC (Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children): 508-775-0275
MASS 2-1-1
The Needy Fund: 508-778-5661
Salvation Army: Bridging the Gap: 508-775-0364 x22
South Bay Mental Health Services: 508-760-1475
YMCA of Cape Cod: 508-362-6500
YMCA of Martha’s Vineyard: 508-696-7171



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Keep Them Coming

A Program To Improve School Attendance



Keep Them Coming

An effective Program to Improve School Attendance throughout the Cape & Islands



Why it Matters

If children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and a chance to build a habit of good attendance and the social interactions that will carry them into college and careers.

Children who were chronically absent in their kindergarten and 1st grade years were far less likely to read proficiently at the end of the 3rd grade.

Yes, Kindergarten DOES matter!

How the Program Works

Every school district has its own parameters for allowable unexcused absences within the school year.

Depending on the School District, once a child is absent for multiple days a phone call is made to the parents indicating the importance of attending school.

If attendance continues to be an issue a meeting is set up with the parents, the School Adjustment Counselor and Principal. This is an informative, general non confrontational meeting addressing the importance of being in school and assisting with school and outside resources.

The school will continue to monitor the child's attendance.



Continued Truant Behavior

The School will notify the Cape & Island's District Attorney's Office (DAO) to request a meeting with a representative from the DAO, school personnel and other community based organizations.

These meetings are not punitive and are designed to work **with** the school and families to provide the services and support each family may need. This collaboration between the school, families, community partners and the DAO has developed creative problem solving methods for improving the child's attendance.

If attendance fails to improve after this meeting, an application for a Child Requiring Assistance (C.R.A.) for the student may be filed by the school administration in juvenile court.

For application:

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/courtsandjudges/courts/juvenilecourt/forms/cra-agreement-motion-to-extend-informal-assistance-jv-095-re.pdf>